



Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

For Immediate Release
May 22, 2008

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Flag, Medals and Remembrance

Be a Part of National Celebrations

(FRANKFORT, May 22, 2008) – Flying the flag, wearing your medals, honoring veterans and enjoying a nationally televised concert are all ways Kentuckians can join millions of their fellow citizens in observing Memorial Day.

Governor Steven Beshear to be guest speaker at the Frankfort Cemetery at 11 a.m. EDT in Frankfort.

The ceremony is hosted by local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4075.

Flying the Flag on Memorial Day:

On Memorial Day the flag should be flown at half-staff from sunrise until noon only, then raised briskly to the top of the staff until sunset, in honor of the nation's battle heroes.

Veterans Should Wear Their Medals:

To show their pride in military service and teach younger generations about the value of serving our nation, said Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs Les Beavers, Brigadier General, U.S. Army, Ret. Beavers urged veterans across Kentucky to pin on their military medals on Memorial Day, May 26.

"Wearing our medals demonstrates the deep pride our veterans have in our military service," said Beavers. "It also reminds all Kentuckians citizens -- especially the young -- about the sacrifices our veterans have made for our freedom."

He encouraged veterans to display their medals no matter what they are doing on Memorial Day, but especially when attending public events. Beavers said he hopes the wearing of medals by veterans will become a tradition. It began on Veterans Day 2006 under a national program called "Veterans Pride Initiative."

About 24 million living Americans have served in the armed forces, with nearly 18 million wearing the uniforms of the U.S. military during times of war and conflict.

Beavers encourages veterans to wear their medals on Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Veterans Day, and when attending other patriotic events. Major U.S. veterans organizations have endorsed the Veterans Pride Initiative.

Additional information about the initiative is featured at VA's Web site at <http://www.va.gov/veteranspride/>, where veterans can also learn how to replace mislaid medals or confirm the decorations to which they are entitled.

National Moment of Remembrance

Monday, May 26, at 3 p.m. local time, Major League Baseball games will stop, Amtrak train whistles will blast across the country and hundreds of other nationwide participants will encourage Americans to pause for the Memorial Day **National Moment of Remembrance**. The ‘**Moment**’ was established by an act of Congress, to honor those who died in service to our country.

All citizens, alone or with family and friends, wherever they may be at 3 p.m., local time, are asked to pause for a **Moment** of reflection and rededication to give something back to our country in memory of our Nation’s fallen. The goal is to put “Memorial” back into Memorial Day. A Gallup poll revealed that only 28 percent of Americans know the meaning of this noble holiday.

“We want Americans to contemplate those things that bind us together. The legacy of those who died to make this country better – from the Revolutionary War to the present – is something that strengthens and unites us. We want every child to say ‘I know why I am free and I know who died for my freedom.’ ” said Carmella LaSpada, Director of the White House Commission on Remembrance. *The White House Commission on Remembrance* was established in 2000 by Congress in Public Law 106-579. Its purpose is to promote the ‘**Moment**’ and the values of Memorial Day by acts of remembrance throughout the year.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has partnered with the Commission to bring recognition to the National Moment of Remembrance and encourages every American to attend Memorial Day events and to participate in the **Moment**. When we honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, we are honoring those who have served and those still serving.

Other participants in the Moment include, NASCAR, the National Constitution Center, Liberty Bell, Pennsylvania Turnpike Authority, schools, universities, hospitals, United Spinal Association, retirement communities, shopping malls, National Parks, National Grocers’ Association, airports, bus lines, and the International Space Station.

National Memorial Day Concert:

As the war in Iraq and Afghanistan wages on, PBS unites our nation with the award-winning **National Memorial Day Concert** honoring the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, their families at home and all of those who have given their lives for our country. The event, which has become the memorial service for our entire nation, is co-hosted for the third year by **Gary Sinise** (*CSI:New York*) and Tony Award-winner **Joe Mantegna** (*Criminal Minds*), two acclaimed actors who have dedicated themselves to veteran’s causes and supporting our troops in active service. The top-rated show will be broadcast live on PBS from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol on **Sunday, May 25, 2008 from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. ET** (check local listings) before a concert audience of 300,000, millions more at home, as well as to our troops serving around the world on the American Forces Radio and Television Network.

This year, the event will pay special tribute to the veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam and the sacred war memorials built in their honor in our nation's capital. Actor, highly decorated World War II veteran and 14-year *National Memorial Day Concert* participant Charles Durning will also be recognized for his bravery and sacrifice as part of the "greatest generation" who stepped forward in a time of need. And, the valor of our newest veterans will be honored as we examine the bonds that buddies form on the battlefields of Afghanistan.

Ceremonies at Kentucky's State Veterans Cemeteries in Hopkinsville and Radcliff

Kentucky Veterans Cemetery West in Hopkinsville and Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central in Radcliff will hold Year of Honors Remembrance ceremonies at 11 a.m. local time on Memorial Day.

History of Memorial Day:

The origins of Memorial Day as a national celebration are more than 140 years old, dating to the end of the Civil War and organized efforts to decorate the graves of the war dead with springtime flowers.

For more than a century, communities around the country celebrated Memorial Day on May 30 to honor local veterans who fought in the Civil War. It was not until after World War I, however, that the day was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress, though it is still often called Decoration Day. It was then moved to the last Monday in May.

To ensure the sacrifices of America's fallen heroes are never forgotten, in December 2000, the U.S. Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law "The National Moment of Remembrance Act," P.L. 106-579, creating the White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance. The commission's charter is to "encourage the people of the United States to give something back to their country, which provides them so much freedom and opportunity" by encouraging and coordinating commemorations in the United States of Memorial Day and the National Moment of Remembrance.

The National Moment of Remembrance encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation. As Moment of Remembrance founder Carmella LaSpada states: "It's a way we can all help put the memorial back in Memorial Day."